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discoveries and improvements of others. Yet so lofty are the notions, which they entertain of their own superiority in this respect, that it was long a prevalent opinion among the Spaniards, that God conversed with Moses on Mount Sinai in the Spanish language, and revealed to them long ago all the many secrets and hidden mysteries of nature, which are yet the objects of the diligent researches and inquiries of the most learned philosophers of the world.

Torrubia published his *Natural History of Spain* in 1754. This was accompanied with an introduction, composed of a great number of encomiums on the mighty powers of the author, and the happy lot of Spain. These were written by some of the most learned men of the country, and are highly characteristick of the national character of the Spaniards. The following is an extract from the encomium of father Hieronimus of Salamanca, and may serve as an example of the whole. "Even if I had an hundred tongues, and if each of them, nay, if every individual part of my body, every joint, every vein, was endowed with the faculty of the most eloquent language, yet how very unfit, how totally unable should I be, to express the delight, which the perusal of this natural history afforded me." In confidence that all Europe pays the most profound attention to him, the reverend father goes on; "Behold Torrubia, the crowned lion of Spain, the modern Geryon, a philosopher who has surprised nature in the fact, a wonder of literature, to whom nothing rises superiour, save his own immortal natural history. He is the favoured child of Providence, who bestowed every advantage on him, adding as an enchantment to them all, the inestimable blessing of being born in Spain. Happy favoured Spain! Thou faithful genius of our nation, thou art ever constant, ever enlightened, ever invincible, ever triumphant over ignorance and error!"

The Royal Society.

WHEN we look over some of the earlier transactions of the Royal Society, we are equally astonished at the wretched state of science, and the extreme ignorance and credulity of some of the greatest men of that period. It is no longer a mystery, that those sage and laborious advocates for philo-

sophical improvement should bring down upon themselves the ridicule and raillery of the wits of the age, as well as the direful hatred of that sturdy race of philosophers, who believed that the ten categories carried the human mind to the utmost stretch of its powers. The wits could not remain grave, when they saw men with long beards and profound looks sporting with the baubles and indulging in the fantasies of infancy; and no good Aristotelian could possibly sit with composure and see innovation stare him in the face, and sacrilegious attempts boldly making to undermine the mighty fabrick, which he regarded with awful reverence, and which had stood unmoved from the days of its architect, the Stagyrte. He clothed himself in his panoply of syllogisms, thrust out the horns of his dilemmas, and took his stand under the banner of his master, but in vain. The experimentalist persevered, in defiance of the wits and the schoolmen, and although he was often ridiculous, and sometimes absurd, yet the mists of error and ignorance moved slowly away, brighter prospects opened gradually before him, and enabled him to pursue his course with more certainty and success.

We can hardly realize at this time, that no more than one hundred and fifty years ago men of learning and eminence seriously anticipated the time, when journeys would be made to the moon with as much ease as a voyage across the Atlantick; when it would be as common a thing to buy a pair of wings to fly into a remote country, as to buy a pair of boots to go a long journey; when sympathetick conveyances would be carried on at the distance of the Indies with as much certainty, as by a literary correspondence; and when the grey hairs and exhausted strength of age would be restored to the beauty and vigour of youth by a simple medical process. Yet these speculations were actually advanced, with a great deal of gravity and confidence, by Glanville, one of the staunchest advocates for the society, and its ablest defender against the wit and virulence of Stubbe, and the angry stormings of the irritable peripatetick of Chew.

The following are some of the curious queries, which the society sent to Sir Philliberts Vernatti, who resided in Batavia, requesting him to answer them according to the best information he could obtain.

“ Whether diamonds and other precious stones grow again, after three or four years, in the same place where they have been digged out ?

“ Whether there be a hill in Sumatra, which burneth continually, and a fountain which runneth pure balsam ?

“ Whether in the island of Sambrero there be found a vegetable, which grows up to a tree, shrinks down, when one offers to pluck it up, into the ground, and would quite shrink, unless held very hard ? And whether the same, being forcibly plucked up, hath a worm for its root, diminishing more and more, according as the tree groweth in greatness ; and as soon as the worm is wholly turned into the tree, rooting in the ground, and so growing great ? And whether the same plucked up young, turns, by that time it is dry, into a hard stone, much like to coral ?

“ What ground there is for that relation, concerning horns taking root and growing about Goa ?

“ Whether the Indians can so prepare that stupifying herb, *Datura*, that they make it lie several days, months, years, according as they will have it, in a man’s body, without doing him any hurt, and at the end kill him, without missing half an hour’s time ?

“ Whether those that be stupified by the herb, *Datura*, are recovered by moistening the soles of their feet in fair water ?

“ Whether the *Arbor Triste* sheds its flowers at the rising of the sun, and shoots them again at the setting of the sun ; and whether at the rising of the sun the leaves drop off as well as the flowers ?

“ Whether the animal, called *Abados*, hath teeth, claws, flesh, blood, and skin, as well as his horns, antidotal ; and whether the horns of those beasts are better or worse, according to the food they live upon ?

“ Whether the falsifying of China musk is not rather done by mixing oxen and cows’ livers, dried and pulverized, with some of the concrete flesh and blood of the China muscat, than by beating together the bare flesh and blood of this animal ?

“ Whether it be winter on the east side of the mountain *Gates*, which cometh from the north to *Cape Comorin*, whilst it is summer on the west side ?

“ Whether there be a tree in Mexico, that yields water, wine, vinegar, oil, milk, honey, wax, thread, and needles ?”